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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [AF](#) [IN](#) [PK](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA CONCERNED POST-MUSHARRAF INSTABILITY HARMS
PAKISTAN'S ANTI-EXTREMIST EFFORTS

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) MFA Senior Counselor for Pakistan Aleksey Yudintsev told us on August 21 that Russia was concerned that Musharraf's resignation as President of Pakistan would contribute to the country's existing political instability and draw attention from Pakistan's efforts to fight its extremist insurgency. The GOR thought that PM Gilani's government, which had already demonstrated indecisiveness in dealing with extremists, would allow the counter-insurgency to stall as the nation's political parties jockeyed to have their candidate replace Musharraf. Yudintsev thought it likely that the already unstable political coalition behind Gilani would soon collapse, as the only thing holding them together was opposition to Musharraf.

¶2. (C) Yudintsev said that while the GOR had long backed Musharraf as the individual most capable of maintaining stability in Pakistan and tackling the extremist threat, the President's near total loss of political support made his position untenable and required his resignation. Yudintsev assumed that Musharraf and Army Chief Kayani consulted with Pakistan's closest partners, the U.S., Great Britain and China, on this issue. Russia, however, does not have this type of relationship with Pakistan and remained silent.

¶3. (C) Yudintsev explained that Russia had gained confidence in the Pakistani military's ability to control the nation's nuclear arsenal, and that the GOR's primary concern was that Pakistan end extremist control of the country's tribal regions. Their use as a training ground for a variety of terrorist groups threatened not only Pakistan's stability, but, more importantly from Russia's perspective, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Yudintsev said that the GOR also feared that individuals trained in Pakistani terrorist camps would bring their fight to Russia's Muslim regions.

¶4. (C) Yudintsev expressed concern that with Musharraf gone, and a looming power struggle between Pakistan's political parties, the country was without clear leadership on regional and security issues. Fortunately, Army Chief Kayani, who had proven himself a capable leader determined to keep the armed forces out of domestic politics, could step in as he did on his recent visit to Kabul to consult with Afghan and ISAF forces. Yudintsev said the MFA was surprised Kayani went to Afghanistan after Karzai said bilateral ties would be downgraded after the recent bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul was linked to Pakistani intelligence. The MFA assumed that the U.S. played a role in getting Kayani to Kabul.

¶5. (C) Yudintsev explained that the GOR believed that Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) maintained contacts with militant groups in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Indian-controlled Kashmir, although it remained unclear whether these were official contacts. Yudintsev doubted that the top levels of the ISI or military would countenance such

ties, considering that many of these officers were appointed by Musharraf and Kayani. It was possible, however, that lower ranking officials, or even retired officers, maintained these contacts and were responsible for the suspected connection between the ISI and the Indian Embassy bombing.

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